

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, paragraph 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

One common use of ASPs is for storing and retrieving documents. For example, user 72 may want to store business documents as electronic files in an ASP to save physical and electronic storage space local to the user 72. These business documents can be retrieved by the user 72 by accessing the storage ASP at any time. Moreover, user 72 can obtain large documents such as reference documents and ~~end~~ books from a document retrieval ASP as needed. These storage and retrieval ASP services create a further problem in that voluminous documents must be transmitted between the user 72 and the ASP 10-40 via the user=s network connection which has a limited data transfer capacity. This may lead to the communication line between the user 72 and the ASP 10-40 being busy during extended transmission period times.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, paragraph 28, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals designate identical or corresponding parts throughout the several views, Figure 2 is a block diagram showing an overall system configuration for managing documents according to an embodiment of the present invention. The system includes a network 50 a plurality of ASPs 10, 20, 30 ~~20~~, 40, a document manager 60, a network 55, a plurality of users 70, 72, 74 and 76. The users 70-76 are interconnected by the network 55, and the ASPs 10-40 are similarly interconnected by network 50. Network 55 is connected to network 50 by way of the document manager 60, although these networks may be connected directly to each other, and may be parts of a single network such as the Internet. Thus, the users 70-76 and ASPs 10-40 are remote with

respect to the document manager 60. Each user 70-76 may be a personal computer system such as the one shown as user 70 in Figure 1, or may be implemented as the general purpose computer system shown in Figure 15. Alternatively, users 70-76 may be a facsimile machine, digital copier, scanner, hand held device, or any known device for processing and communicating data via a network. In addition or alternatively, users 70-76 may be implemented as a multifunction document processing center such as the one shown in Figures 11A-11D, or a document storage device such as the Ricoh eCabinet™. ASPs 10-40 are computer systems for remotely providing any of a variety of services via a communications network. The ASPs 10-40 may also be implemented as a general purpose computer such as the computer system 1500 of Figure 15.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, paragraph 30, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating the document manager 60 in more detail according to an embodiment of the present invention. As seen in this figure, the document manager 60 connects an exemplary user 70 to ASPs 10-40 by way of networks 50 and 55. The user 70 may be implemented as any device for processing and communicating data via a network including computer system 1500 of Figure 15. The document manager 60 includes search engine 62, storage device 64, user interaction device 65, format standardizing device 66, consulting device 67, and charge engine 68, as well as a work flow engine 69 shown ~~in~~ on phantom. The work flow engine is an optional element used for issuing instructions to and ~~an~~ establishing alliances among multiple ASPs as will be discussed with respect to Figure 8.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, paragraph 39, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The document manager 60 also provides the user 70 with the links to the ASP documents so that the user may access the documents via the document manager 60 without having to store any document at the computer of the user, nor at the document manager 60, if desired. In this respect, the user 70 benefits from the searching, retrieving and storing known-how of the ASPs. In this embodiment, the ASP can charge a fee for access to their documents. In one embodiment, the fee may be incorporated into a unified bill generated by the document manager 60 and provided to the user 70 for its benefit. The term "unified bill" herein means a bill that includes the charges of at least two bills, or alternatively includes the charges from at least two different entities.